No. 185

The Christian News-Letter

Edited by
J. H. OLDHAM

June 30th, 1943

DEAR MEMBER,

President Roosevelt's recent warning, repeating that of the Prime Minister, that the use of gas by the enemy will be followed by full and swift retaliation in kind, opens up new horrifying possibilities and is an occasion for taking stock and asking ourselves where the war is taking us.

I do not propose to discuss in advance or in the abstract a contingency which may not arise. In this, as in all questions in the social and political spheres, a judgment and decision can be reached only in the light of all the factors and circumstances when these are known. Any discussion would be inconclusive which did not take full account of the technical questions involved in the use of gas as a weapon, i.e. the relative military advantage and the relative amount of suffering inflicted on non-combatants as compared, for example, with high explosives, the blockade and the bursting of dams.

The President gave a categorical assurance that in no circumstances would the United States resort to the use of gas except as a counter-measure. The purpose of the pronouncement was plainly preventive, and the warning was directed to the protection, not primarily of America, which is comparatively immune, but of other peoples more immediately exposed to danger.

Experience in the shackling of prisoners should guard us from taking for granted that retaliation for its own sake is necessarily a right course. It is difficult to understand why some people are so ready without a thought to become slavish copyists of the Nazis, whose principles and conduct we profess to loathe.

THE CONTRADICTIONS OF WAR

President Roosevelt stigmatized the use of gas as barbarous and inhuman, outlawed by the general opinion of civilized mankind, and went on to assert that, if the enemy resorted to it, we should at once retaliate. I am not criticizing the inconsistency; it belongs to the insane logic of war. But inhumanity does not become less inhuman when it is our act.

Every fresh aggravation of the inhumanity of war makes the problem for the Christian conscience more acute. In the fulfilment of what we believe to be our duty we are driven by the remorseless logic of the conflict to perpetrate ourselves the most odious acts. Contrary to our will, we are forced to become the doers of despicable deeds. The persistent, pitiless rain of metals and explosives from the sky on the habitations of men, destroying both their persons and the

monuments of their toil, and the letting loose of natural forces, with quite unpredictable results in death, devastation and disease, are an utter reversal of the purposes of civilization. Modern methods of warfare, indiscriminate in their nature, compel us to inflict death, wounds and life-long disability on children and other innocent, or relatively innocent, persons. There could be no more hideous contradiction of the purpose for which Christ came into the world.

These acts are not to be laid especially to the charge of soldiers and airmen. They of all are, perhaps, the least guilty. They obey orders ; what they must do they do at the risk, and often at the price, of their own lives. The pollution attaches to all of us as members of nations which make war.

If we are to remain men, we must refuse to be hypnotized by the fallacy of merging individual human beings in an undifferentiated mass bearing a national label. A member of Parliament uttered a warning the other day against feeling pity for the Germans or Italians. As a matter of rough justice I do not doubt that the leaders of National-Socialism and Fascism and their many active supporters deserve everything that comes to them. I have no wish that the vigorous prosecution of the war should be relaxed. But in the thoughtless use of national labels we are dealing with abstractions and not with the real world. This has nothing to do with the debatable question whether there is, or is not, an " other " Germany, to which leniency may be shown after the war. What we cannot forget without disaster is the simple fact that the real world consists of human persons, with their individual claims to life and happiness. The fact that a man is a man is more fundamental than that he is a German. If we are concerned about methods of warfare, it is not because of any sentimental attitude towards Germans as such, but because of the imperative need of preserving man's humanity.

" It is not superfluous," the Pope declared, in an allocution at the beginning of this month, " at the moment when the spectre of still more frightful instruments of destruction and death arises in the minds of men, to admonish the civilized world that it is walking on the edge of a precipice, fraught with untold disasters."

What are we to do about this intolerable split in our moral existence ? I need not repeat the reasons why I do not think that to become a pacifist is a way out of the dilemma. What the Axis Powers would do with victory is fairly plain ; so long as the slenderest chance remains of a better alternative, the United Nations are bound, for the sake of future generations, to keep that possibility open.

But the future we all desire is every bit as much imperilled by the attitude of those who surrender themselves blindly to the fury and destructiveness of war. We cannot make any sense of the war unless we pursue simultaneously with all our might the *double* purpose of defeating the Axis Powers and of achieving through the war the ends which make their defeat necessary. It is sheer madness to squander in the years of war the spiritual capital that will be needed for the tasks beyond. Our acts form us ; from their imprint on our character

there is no escape. If our souls become dyed with the inhumanities of war, how can we create an order of justice and humanity ?

It is essential, therefore, that there should be at least some people who know what we are doing and who will not disguise from themselves the evil that is in ourselves and in our own actions as well as in the enemy. The truth is that in many respects we resemble the enemy. That, as one of our members writes, is the curse of war ; it is the great leveller and brings out the worst in us. It is having that effect on multitudes of individuals. We need to be honest about all this.

It may be said that we cannot wage war wholeheartedly unless we stifle our consciences. But that price is too high. I am not speaking of the heat of battle, but of our settled and dominant purposes. The truth is that only in recognizing clearly the horror of what is taking place is there any hope of winning the war in such a way as to win also the peace. We have to know the real depth and power of evil if we are to overcome it. To face all the facts is the true realism.

Honesty with ourselves in these matters will be our protection against employing, encouraging or applauding violence in excess of what is strictly necessary to attain military ends, and will develop in us the qualities of self-discipline, self-mastery and restraint which are indispensable for the making of a good peace.

The contradiction which becomes in war intolerably acute is, in fact, inherent in the whole of our social life and in ourselves as individuals. To have it brought home to us through our present experiences may help us to a fresh understanding of Christianity. Nothing shows more plainly the tragic nature of our human existence than that our efforts to do right should involve us in acts of fiendish cruelty. Most men to-day, when they think of sin at all, limit its meaning to individual wrong choices. St. Paul had a profounder insight when he wrote of sin as a power reigning in the universe and holding men in slavery. His view is closer to the facts of human experience when he describes himself as *sold under sin*. We are compelled by the facts of to-day to recognize that we are in the same dilemma. " The good which I would I do not ; but the evil which I would not, that I practise. O wretched man that I am ; who shall deliver me out of the body of this death ? "

If there are, in fact, evil forces in the cosmos that can frustrate and defeat our best intentions, salvation can come to us only from without. Our one hope lies in what Christianity asserts to be a fact—a Divine intervention in history.

To believe that in the real world of history the sinister, all-embracing power of evil has been met and vanquished does not bring us present release from the social solidarity in which we are bound together in sin. But it makes an enormous difference in the way we view the present situation. It saves us from the fatal folly of supposing that evil is only in our enemies and not also in ourselves, and thereby from the mistakes into which those inevitably fall in whom the spirit of penitence and humility is lacking. It nerves us at the same time to continue without respite the fight against evil, in the knowledge that the ultimate power in the universe is an invincible love.

No one, perhaps, in our time has exerted a greater influence on thought about the British Empire, and few have played so large a part in its major crises, as Lionel Curtis. He was one of a small group of able Englishmen who fought in the Boer War, or were attracted to South Africa when it was over by the personality of Lord Milner, and who became the chief force in bringing about the Union. When their task in South Africa was completed they found themselves confronted with the unsolved problem of the relations of the component parts of the Empire and resolved to devote themselves to its study, founding for the purpose the quarterly review, *The Round Table*.

A report by Curtis was the basis of the famous Selborne Memorandum in which it was unanswerably shown that the only way in which further conflict between the four colonies in South Africa could be avoided was to merge their governments and electorate into one. After writing a book on the relations between the self-governing members of the British Commonwealth, he turned his attention to India, and the discussions he promoted and his writings had a large influence on the form of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. He was later called to take part as a civil servant in dealing with Irish affairs, and had a hand in the making of the Irish treaty. As a member of the British delegation to the peace conference after the last war he realized the urgent need for a better knowledge of foreign affairs, and his enthusiasm and energy were the chief factor in bringing into existence the Royal Institute of International Affairs, with its headquarters at Chatham House.

His career has been marked by a noble and disinterested patriotism, a passionate belief in men and whole-hearted dedication to their service, a power of penetrating quickly to the essentials of a situation and of presenting them in cogent and persuasive form, and a rare courage in bringing the conclusions of his thought to the test of action. For these reasons his ideas, which have been given their latest expression in the pamphlet *Faith and Works*,[1] have a strong claim on our attention.

Yours sincerely,

J. H. Oldham

[1] Oxford University Press. 2s.

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THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER

Supplement to No. 185

JUNE 30TH, 1943

A PROPHET ON THE PREVENTION OF WAR

The question which Mr. Curtis sets himself to answer in his latest pamphlet, *Faith and Works*, is what steps we can take to prevent another war. He begins by taking account of a fundamental weakness of democracies. They are ruled by people who have to seek re-election, and those who stand for election are under strong temptation to tell people what they would like to hear and to promise them what they want to get. Real situations in life, however, can be mastered only by those who are prepared to face unpleasant facts and distasteful exertion.

As the result of a life-time of study Mr. Curtis has reached the conclusion, shared with deep conviction by the late Lord Lothian, that the essential cause of war is the fragmentation of humanity into more than sixty sovereign states. If that is a true diagnosis, there is no way of preventing war except by an act of political reconstruction that corresponds to a surgical operation. If the British public decline that operation, then the political thinker has to tell them, just as a consulting physician has to tell the patient who adopts a similar attitude, that in that case there is no remedy for the disease.

At this point Mr. Curtis insists on interrupting his argument. He does not believe that we can fruitfully discuss political proposals unless we are clear about the religious convictions by which they are inspired. An obstinate persuasion of the inseparable connection between religion and politics is the root of his political thinking. It is one reason why his doctrine should receive attention in the Christian News-Letter.

When more than thirty years ago he set himself the task of vindicating the growth and defining the purpose of the British Empire, he found himself forced to ask what were the essential truths which are the basis of man's life on earth. Do our lives end with physical death or do they persist beyond time and space? In all his writings the religious issue has been placed in the foreground. Undeterred by the advice of friends that he should leave these debatable questions on one side and get on with the job of political analysis and construction, Mr. Curtis has insisted that you can make nothing of political problems until you have made up your mind about the ultimate verities.

What then is the religious faith which is the pre-supposition of all his thinking? He firmly believes that there is a personal God, that there is a fundamental difference between right and wrong, that men have a moral sense by which they can discern this difference, that they have an infinite duty which they owe to God and to one another, that the end and object of life is to perfect the nature of men, and that the principal source of inspiration of this faith is the example and teaching of Jesus Christ. If we believe these truths, it is an obligation to stake everything on them. He puts them in the forefront of his pamphlet, because they are the premises on which all that follows rests.

If we reject them, he warns us, we need not read further; for those who hold the materialist creed his argument has no sense or value.

But while these passionately held convictions are the foundation and heart of Mr. Curtis's political philosophy, he is equally concerned to make it clear that he rejects the supernatural claims of Christianity. Into his political treatises there is introduced a discussion of the Resurrection, with the purpose of proving that it is not an essential part of Christian belief. What is the reason of this most strange proceeding?

It is due in part to the sincerity and integrity of his thinking. He must take all his fences. He will not evade any issue, but frankly face it and settle it one way or the other. If he is going to build his political system on Christian foundations, he must make it clear in what sense he is a Christian and in what sense he is not.

But he is influenced also, one cannot help suspecting, by the fact that his primary concern as a thinker is with politics. His thought may be governed to a greater extent than he is aware by the knowledge that, if the political structure of the British Empire is to have a religious foundation, that foundation must be a belief which a substantial proportion of its members can be persuaded to share. Mr. Curtis is acutely conscious that to the great majority of his educated fellow-countrymen the Resurrection is incredible. The fact that his thinking is a structural whole and that he sees that religion and politics cannot be kept apart exposes him to the danger of having to have a religion that will work politically. Take away the stumbling-block of the Resurrection, he feels, and you will have a form of Christianity on which a true, humane, noble political edifice may be reared.

The religious views here summarized are conclusions worked out in detail over many years. The full basis for them is given in a larger work *Civitas Dei*, now republished under the title *The Commonwealth of God*.[1]

Before examining this religious foundation we may complete the outline of the argument of the pamphlet.

The end of life, it has been stated, is the perfecting of men. Man has been created free, intelligent and responsible. How may he become what he is meant to be? He certainly needs teaching. Men must be shown the truth about themselves and the infinite obligation which they owe to one another. That is the function of the Churches. But the Churches are apt to forget that the social framework in which men live imposes its shape on their minds. The influence of what they do is more potent than instruction. If we want to transform men into the likeness of God we must see that the moulds in which they move are shaped in accordance with His will. The social mechanism must be such as will, by its working, develop their sense of duty by exercise.

The State is for Mr. Curtis the organization without which it is not possible for men to fulfil their obligations to one another and develop their moral sense. It is in the political sphere that men can exercise their freedom, choose their course of action, learn from their mistakes, and thereby become responsible members of a human community.

[1] Macmillan's. 10s. 6d.

In the political life of Great Britain this conception of the Commonwealth has found one of its outstanding historical embodiments, and this idea of freedom under the reign of law has leavened in varying degrees the vast structure of the British Empire, to which history offers no parallel. That is Mr. Curtis's apologia for the British Empire ; and nowhere has it been set forth more comprehensively and impressively than in his writings.

But the whole idea and reality of the Commonwealth is doomed to perish unless the further steps can be taken which are necessary to prevent war. While the idea of the Commonwealth has been realized in some degree within States, the relation of sovereign States continues to be one of anarchy. So long as this persists, there is nothing for it but that the rule of the stronger should prevail. There is only one way to end it—that the nations should submit themselves to a common rule of law and create an international government.

The issue which Mr. Curtis will on no account allow us to evade is that there is no means of achieving the desired end except that, as a first step, two or more sovereign nations should be prepared to merge their sovereignty in a common government. He will have no half-way houses. His massive argument—supported by the experience of South Africa, the history of Federal Government in the United States and a relentless analysis of the present position of Great Britain—is directed to prove that the international government must be directly answerable to the people and derive its authority from their votes. Certain functions, such as those of defence and foreign policy, must be entrusted to the popularly elected international government, those relating to internal and social affairs being left to the several national governments.

No one knows better than Mr. Curtis that a system designed to secure the peace of the world can be brought about only step by step. He writes for those who do not despise the day of small things. He would be content if a beginning were made by merging the governments of Great Britain, one or more of the Dominions and one or more of the Western democracies—Belgium, Holland or Norway.

The solid weight of the argument which leads to these conclusions can be grasped only by a careful reading of Mr. Curtis's pamphlet.

We may now come back to the religious faith which is the foundation of everything. It can hardly be doubted that the faith which Mr. Curtis professes, rather than orthodox Christianity, represents the working religious faith of the majority of educated and thoughtful Englishmen, so far as they are religious at all. It is a faith impregnated with so many elements derived from historic Christianity that the claim to be a form of Christianity cannot be denied to it. It is set forth by Mr. Curtis with a conviction and fervour that it would be hard to match.

But it has to be asked whether this is in fact the historic Christian faith. Is it the Christianity of the Bible or something else ?

This is not the place to enter on a discussion of the evidence for the Resurrection, which Mr. Curtis is so anxious to disprove. All that can be said is that belief in the Resurrection is not an excrescence on Christianity which can be sloughed off in order to make it easier to

believe in its essential core, but that it is an integral part of a coherent, profound and far-reaching view of the nature of man, the world and history, which is substantially different from that of Mr. Curtis.

This is well brought out in a small volume entitled *Biblical Politics* by Alexander Miller.[1] The treatment (in 76 pages) is slight, but there is a firm grasp of essentials. You can have Mr. Curtis for two shillings and Mr. Miller for half-a-crown, and they may well be read together.

The traditional view, as set forth in Mr. Miller's pages, has depths that are not found in Mr. Curtis's treatment. In the latter religion is assimilated too closely to politics. It becomes primarily the animating principle of political life. The British Empire, in so far as it embodies the Commonwealth idea, tends to become the real Church.

But if we believe seriously in the Incarnation " wherein the misery of man's plight, the depth of his alienation from God and from his true home, is measured by the greatness of the remedy there provided," the centre of gravity is shifted from man's temporal strivings to the overshadowing reality of that divine act.

Mr. Curtis also has a religious absolute ; there is for him an infinite difference between right and wrong, and an infinite obligation owed to God and man. But in the one case the supreme determinant exists primarily in the conscience of men, in the other in something that has taken place in the cosmos itself independently of any act of man.

But if our religious faith and interpretation of history differ fundamentally from that of Mr. Curtis, this need be no bar to cordial agreement about political aims. Mr. Miller is as convinced as Mr. Curtis about the inseparable connection between religion and politics, though he sees the connection differently. For him too " the Christian man has a very obvious and inescapable political calling." Though in the Biblical view man's whole historical existence is a life of exile, it is in this temporal sphere in which he has been placed that his eternal destiny has to be worked out. He is a citizen of two cities, and his citizenship of the Kingdom of God must deepen his concern that the political order, the realm of law, should fulfil the ends of God.

Mr. Miller is as certain as Mr. Curtis that justice, freedom and security are the necessary conditions of man's life in society according to the will of God. These are the ends that the Christian must resolutely pursue. How they can best be achieved he, like other men, must decide in the light of the facts and of a considered rational judgment of the course which will lead most directly to the desired ends. He will, therefore, listen attentively to the closely reasoned argument of Mr. Curtis, and if he is convinced that the steps proposed are the surest means of preventing war he will give them undeviating support.

He will also pray that he may be inspired with the flaming desire and steely purpose to abolish the unspeakable curse of war, which find expression in the passionate pleading of Mr. Curtis's pamphlet.

J. H. O.

[1] Student Christian Movement Press. 2s. 6d.

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No. 186

The Christian News-Letter

Edited by J. H. OLDHAM

July 14th, 1943

DEAR MEMBER,

One of our members who joined up when the war began and has seen service as an officer in Libya and Syria and is now in India, gives the following account of the state of religion in the Forces, so far as it has come within the range of his own observation :

"I cannot but agree with the gloomy accounts of the spiritual condition of the army that you have received. Of course, I only speak of what I have seen. I know the fallacy of generalization. Very few individuals are at all concerned with the important, the spiritual and the moral problems and values of life. Most men are utterly apathetic towards them. Some officers and men can be roused to display concern with politics ; there is an enormous amount of good fellowship, sharing and cheerfulness ; but there is an almost complete lack of evidence that anyone, except very rare exceptions, regulates his life or opinions by religious principles. I am thinking of decisions about spending leisure hours, expenditure of money, choice of reading, food and drink, language, gambling, political judgments and such things. Wrong decisions here may be consistent with a sincere Christian profession, but also I have known no one except padres who prays or reads the Bible daily."

There is doubtless another side to the picture, even so far as our own nation is concerned. But when we think of Christianity we have always to think of it as embodied in a universal society. If we take a long and large view of Christianity in the world we have to reckon with the possibility that a revitalization of Christian energies may have its beginnings in China or India or Russia, and spread from there throughout the whole Church. At the present time, in particular, to counterbalance the discouraging features of the religious situation, we ought to take continuous note of the power of resistance shown by the Churches on the Continent to the Nazi attempt to destroy the Christian conception and way of life.

THE CHURCH IN HOLLAND

A new protest by the Roman Catholic Bishops and the eight Protestant Churches in Holland was addressed last month to Seyss-Inquart, the German Commissioner in the Netherlands. This action has been taken at a time of great national distress ; the doctors in Holland have found it necessary to call the attention of the German Commissioner to the conditions of starvation in which large sections of the population are now living. The joint protest of the Dutch Churches deserves a careful reading. It is an uncompromising challenge to a tyrannical and all-powerful earthly government in the name of a

higher authority to which men's ultimate allegiance is due. The text is as follows :—

" After many previous events during the occupation years which have forced the Netherlands' Churches to complain to your Excellency, notably with regard to the question of our Jewish citizens, something so terrible is now taking place that we cannot desist from addressing these words in the Name of our Lord to your Excellency. We have already complained about several acts on the part of the occupying power. These acts clash with the spiritual principles of our people, who ever since their birth (as a nation) have at least attempted, together with their Government, to live in accordance with God's word. A beginning has now been made with the sterilization of so-called mixed marriages. But God, Who created heaven and earth, and Whose commandments apply to all men and to Whom your Excellency, too, must give account one day, told men : ' Be fruitful and multiply.' Sterilization means physical and spiritual mutilation, directly at variance with the divine commandment as well as human rights. It is the last consequence of the anti-Christian racial doctrine which destroys nations, and of self-exaltation without bounds. It represents a view of the world and of life that undermines all real Christian existence, making it ultimately impossible.

" Your Excellency is for the moment the highest *de facto* political authority in the Netherlands. As things are, you are entrusted with the maintenance of order and law in the country. You are entrusted with this not only by the Führer of the German Reich, but also through the inscrutable dispensation of God, Whom the Christian Church proclaims on earth. To you apply, exactly as to all other men, and to you especially because you happen to be placed in this high office, the commandments of this Lord and Judge of the entire earth.

" Therefore, the Christian Churches of the Netherlands, ordered by God and in accordance with His Word, say to your Excellency : It is your Excellency's duty to stop the shameful practice of sterilization. We have no illusions. We are well aware that we can hardly expect your Excellency to heed the voice of the Church—that is the voice of the Gospel, that is the voice of God. But what we cannot hope for as a human achievement, we dare to hope for in our faith in Christ. The living God has power to convert and to change your Excellency's heart. For that, too, we pray to God for the good of your Excellency and our suffering people."

Two or three weeks earlier the Roman Catholic hierarchy had issued a Pastoral Letter on the subject of the deportation of workers, which was read in all the Churches in Holland. It includes the following paragraphs :—

" Ever heavier trials visit our country. A world outlook which is diametrically opposed to Christianity has been forced upon our people these last three years. In every sphere Nazism attempts to extend its influence and take control. Although Nazism remains the powerful master of the situation here, the spiritual power of resistance of the overwhelming majority of the Netherlands people is unbroken. This fills us with great consolation and faith in the future. Despite all

suppression of those differently minded and the bait of various material advantages, the Netherlands people will never become Nazi if we remain but loyal to our ancestral faith. There is strength in faith.

"Now the limit has been reached. All able-bodied men who can be spared at all will be deported. This is deportation on a larger scale than the Christian world has ever known. For such happenings we must go back to the times of the Babylonian exile, when God's people were carried off, which made the prophet Jeremiah exclaim: '*Ploratus et ululatus multus.*' The lamentation is heard in Ramah. There is loud weeping and crying; Rachel weeps for her sons.

"Not only does this deportation shock us, but also the horrible injustice, contrary to all human and divine laws. As shepherds of your souls, we may not be silent on what is being done to our people. Posterity would consider it our eternal shame if we viewed this injustice silently. The bishops' task is to stand for the right and to condemn the wrong as wrong, otherwise they would fall short of their duty."

Parallel action was taken by the Dutch Reformed Church, from the pulpits of which a pastoral letter on the subject of the deportations was read in all congregations.

CHRISTIANITY AND POLITICS

The publication of last week's Supplement has brought me the following letter from Mr. Lionel Curtis :—

"My Dear Oldham,

"Your review of *Faith and Works* in the Christian News-Letter of 30th June has touched me deeply, for it glows with the warmth of a close and long-standing friendship. There is, however, one paragraph which, if left without comment from me, might mislead your readers. The paragraph in question is that in which you say that my feeling that politics and religion cannot be kept apart exposes me to the danger of having to have a religion that will work politically.

"The pamphlet is, as you note, a closely summarized statement of conclusions reached in *Civitas Dei*, a book of more than 900 pages which took me fourteen years of research to write. Having set out to discover some guiding principle in public affairs, I reached the conviction that men can only produce some order in this discordant world in so far as they believe in spiritual values or, in plain words, hold religious beliefs. I also noticed that more and more the younger generation were tending to treat religion as outside the pale of realities, as a subject the discussion of which was waste of time for people of education.

"I asked myself why this was so, and felt I had found the answer when in reading Gwatkin's Church History I came across the quotation from Lessing, to which Gwatkin does not give the reference, 'that the ultimate verities can neither be proved nor disproved by anything which happens in the world of phenomena.'

"This dictum of Lessing's suddenly made explicit a question which had lurked in my mind since childhood, why miracles were needed to prove the teaching of Christ—that God is a spirit, that is to say a personality, but with none of our limitations, utterly good, all knowing, the ultimate reality, the Creator of all things, especially men, who are His

children, made in His likeness, and that we, like Himself, exist beyond time and space, are eternal—for ' God is the God of the living and not of the dead.'

" Can the truth of doctrines like these really depend upon whether or not the personality of Christ himself, after physical death, was presented in visible form to the eyes of his followers ? If not, then St. Paul was wrong when he wrote that, ' if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain ' (I. Cor. xv. 14). Personally I am as sure that Christ was ' raised ' as I am that my friends T. E. Lawrence or Philip Lothian have been ' raised,' because I believe their personalities continue to exist after physical death and will always continue to exist. But I don't think that either St. Paul, the Churches since his time, or you yourself mean that. What I think you mean is this, that unless the personality of our Lord was presented in some form to the senses of his disciples after his death, we have no right to believe that the souls of men are indestructible.

" What disquiets me is this. The publication of *Civitas Dei* aroused a great deal of controversy on the question whether miracles did or did not happen. Personally I do not believe that they did. But my real point was that which I raised on page 193, when I wrote that ' ultimate verities cannot be proved by manifestations in the world of phenomena.' In all the criticisms of the book that I read, I cannot recall one reference to this statement, and the same, my friend, is true of your kindly review of *Faith and Works*. You do not answer or even refer to my plain question on page 9, ' The essential truths which our Lord propounded were belief in God, a God of the living and not of the dead, and that men have an infinite duty to Him and to their brethren. Would faith in these doctrines really be shattered if some archaeologist found unanswerable proof that the body of Jesus was removed from the tomb and had not returned to life ? ' But now I go further than this. ' Would our faith in the essential doctrines of Christ be shattered if historians discovered unanswerable proofs that the personality of our Lord never appeared to the senses of his followers after his death ? ' My own unhesitating answer is, ' No, it wouldn't.'

" My real case, then, is that the Churches from the time of St. Paul onwards have presented certain beliefs as the necessary basis of the teaching of Christ. The educated world has now come to realize that such beliefs, even if they are true, could provide no basis whatever for the faith which our Lord was teaching to men. Yet the Churches continue to tell them that unless they hold these beliefs they cannot be Christians. ' Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men.'

" It is time, I plead, for the Church to consider whether its own neglect of this warning is not in the main responsible for the drift of civilised society back into paganism, which is now plunging the world into chaos.

" There are in the Gospel sayings ascribed to our Lord which I feel sure that he never uttered. There are others which I am quite sure that he uttered, most of all when he is recorded as saying, ' Know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'

"In Chapter XIII of *Faith and Works* I have noticed the failure of politicians and journalists when dealing with post-war settlement to discuss or even to mention the one question which I suggest governs all others—the power of Britain as at present constituted to discharge our pledges under the Atlantic Charter, to prevent the recurrence of world-war and to carry out social reform. The explanation I have there given is that when public men meet with a question which, if discussed, would oblige them to reconsider the speeches they have made and the articles they have written all their lives, they instinctively tend to avoid it. They have said so often that the British Commonwealth is the last word in political wisdom, and commended it as an example to be copied by the United Nations, that they never face or mention the fact that twice in this century it has failed to prevent world wars, the task to which the United Nations are now committed by the Atlantic Charter. One cannot but feel that the same instinct is at work in the Churches when they are confronted with the question whether the immortality of the soul really depends on the resurrection. 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead' is one of the things which I am sure that our Lord said. Is it not time that the Church should face the question whether St. Paul could be also right when he wrote, 'If Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain and your faith also is vain'?

"I humbly implore you and your readers to face this question.

All Souls College, Ever yours,
Oxford. LIONEL CURTIS."

So varied is the membership of the Christian News-Letter, that the reactions of readers to this letter will be very different. Some will be pained by the denial of what they feel to be an essential, vital and precious part of their faith, while others will be aware that Mr. Curtis has given forcible expression to questions that have long been in their minds. Time is needed to decide in what way, within the limits imposed by the nature and size of the Christian News-Letter, the questions which Mr. Curtis has posed can best be followed up. There are many things, of which there is no mention in his necessarily brief letter, that need to be brought into the picture.

All I want to say just now is that it is important to note the way in which these questions have come before us. They have not found their way into the Christian News-Letter as a reflection of active theological debates taking place at the present time within the Churches about the meaning of the Christian faith, though the questions are certainly latent in the Christian thought of to-day, but they come to us from the arena in which men are contending for the future of their political existence.

All the main tendencies of modern political thought—communism, fascism and the various expressions of secularized liberal thought—are alike in rejecting the transcendent and in finding the whole meaning of man's life within the temporal process. In sharp opposition to all these tendencies the political philosophy of Mr. Curtis is rooted in the conviction that the only possible foundation of a stable political order is

religious belief—by which he means Christian belief. He is, therefore, driven by his search for a solid and enduring basis for the British Commonwealth of Nations and for the political life of mankind, to which his whole life has been dedicated, to ask what Christian belief is. And he asks this fundamental question with the courage, candour and seriousness which characterize the rest of his political thinking.

Mr. Curtis is emphatically on the side of the Christian understanding of the meaning of human life. The question at issue, which is wider than the one stated in his letter, is how far the Christian understanding of life is bound up inseparably with certain unique happenings at a particular period of human history, and with the whole conception of the world, of history and of man in which the Church has tried to embody its interpretation of the meaning of those events.

No one who understands the profundity of the issues which Mr. Curtis raises will expect the Christian News-Letter to provide a complete answer to questions that have exercised the minds of men ever since Christianity appeared. But from our particular standpoint on the boundary between the Church and society, between the Christian faith and the social forces which are shaping the modern world, we are compelled, no less than Mr. Curtis, to take note of the issues which the resistless logic of events is forcing to the front. Nothing could be more welcome from the Christian standpoint than that the relevance of what we believe as Christians to the fierce conflicts of our times should be perceived with growing clearness, and that Christian faith should become an active force in the political arena. In proportion as this takes place the divorce between religion and life will have been overcome. It will be sheer gain if theology ceases to be a preserve of specialists, which it is too much at present, and is pressed into the open to answer the real questions of ordinary men.

A representative expression of opinion from our members on the issues raised by Mr. Curtis would help us in considering what form a future Supplement or Supplements might take.

PARENTS

Those who like a little fun with their philosophy will enjoy the chapter called " Civilization as Education " in the late Professor R. G. Collingwood's last book *The Great Leviathan*.[1] In it Professor Collingwood comes out in unqualified and exuberant support of parents as the proper, and for that reason the only successful, educators of their children. He fulminates against Plato as the arch-traitor who " planted on the European world the crazy idea that education ought to be professionalized," and sounds the battle-cry to parents to rise up against the tyranny of schoolmasters, take the law into their own hands and educate their children themselves, using the schoolmasters as occasional tutors in specialized knowledge. When we have enjoyed the fun and fury, we come back again to a world in which not only schoolmasters but a state system of education have come to stay, a world to which his remarks seem to bear very little practical relation.

Corroboration of some of his main contentions from very different quarters ought to make us wonder whether Professor Collingwood's

[1] Noted in the Supplement to C.N-L. No. 168, and in C.N-L. No. 153.

insight may not be prophetic rather than crazy. What sort of difference would it make to our educational schemes if we took seriously his contention that parents have an educational rôle to play which not only should not, but cannot, be played by anybody else ? A small book [1] by Miss Dorothy Burlingham and Miss Anna Freud, two psychologists who have been running war-time nurseries for children from the age of ten days to six years, describes the effect of separation from parents on many different children :—

" Every step in early education is closely connected with one of the phases of the child's attachment to some living object in the outer world. During the first years of life every child should make steady and uninterrupted progress towards social adaptation . . . When something happens to shake his confidence in his parents or to rob him altogether of his loved objects, he withdraws into himself once more and regresses in social adaptation instead of progressing.

" The advances he has made in becoming clean, in being less destructive, in modesty, pity and unselfishness, i.e. the first setting up of moral ideals within himself, have on the child's part not only been a sacrifice. He has felt pleasure in these achievements because they were made for the sake of the parents and thus brought their own reward. When the attachment to the parents is destroyed, all these new achievements lose their value for the child. There is no sense any more in being good, clean or unselfish."

Facts such as these are commonplaces to readers of modern educational journals. The trouble is that they are not known, nor are sufficient steps being taken to make them known, to the ordinary parent.

The urgent need for defining more clearly the functions in education of the state and the family respectively is impressing itself increasingly on serious minds. In a recent correspondence in *The Times Educational Supplement*, Dr. E. Meissner made the plea that parents should resist the encroachments of the state before it is too late. " The shattered home of the common man," he says, " makes state interference necessary to protect his children from neglect. Must this state of affairs be accepted as incurable ? Must all children be rescued by the state—even those who are not exposed to neglect ? "

This is a crucial issue. We are all deeply moved by such facts as are described in *Our Towns*.[2] We rightly feel that strong action should be taken to rescue children from the kind of surroundings there portrayed and from the type of parent—feckless, dirty and ignorant—who so horrified the country cottager in the first weeks of evacuation. But we are on the wrong road if we begin by allowing State action in education to be determined by the shortcomings of the bad or incapable parent. The right question to ask is, " How will this affect the good parent or the child from the good home ? "—for these are the majority and the mainstay of the nation's life.

THE SUPPLEMENT

Professor Henry Van Dusen of Union Theological Seminary in New York, who has been from the beginning a warm friend of the

[1] *Young Children in War Time.* Geo. Allen and Unwin. 1s. 6d.
[2] *Our Towns : A Close-up.* Oxford University Press. 5s.

News-Letter, has sent me the paper which appears as this week's Supplement. He is publishing it also in *Christianity and Crisis*,[1] the counterpart in many respects of the Christian News-Letter in the United States. It expresses the mind of an influential group of Christian thinkers in America about current issues, and is a valuable means of keeping in touch with American Christian thought.

The matter of the paper is as much the concern of British as American readers, and since only about 2 per cent of our readers also subscribe to *Christianity and Crisis*, they will not take it too much amiss if, for once, I ignore them for the benefit of the remaining 98 per cent of our membership. It has been necessary to shorten the paper to make it fit into the space of a four-page Supplement; most of the omissions were suggested by Dr. Van Dusen, but I have had to make a few further excisions.

Dr. Van Dusen recognizes that the attitudes and tendencies which he describes as American and British respectively are each represented in the other nation also. I would myself be disposed to emphasize this even more strongly. An ingenious mind could produce many illustrations from Britain of what is described as the predominant American attitude, and vice versa. But that there are substantial differences in the way of looking at things which are the result of different historical experiences is unquestionable. It is essential for mutual understanding that they should be clearly in our minds. To recognize and make allowance for the bias which attaches to every particular point of view is the first necessary step towards arriving at a common mind.

Yours sincerely,

J. H. Oldham

[1] Annual subscription 8s. Orders should be sent to the C.N-L. office.

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